

Federal Probation

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California..... Walter L. Barkdull

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Federal Probation

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This Issue in Brief

Restitution As Innovation or Unfilled Promise?—Author Burt Galaway discusses what we have learned about restitution since the establishment of the Minnesota Restitution Center in 1972 and in light of the early theory and work of Stephen Schafer. Noting that restitution meets both retributive and utilitarian goals for punishment, the author finds considerable public and victim support for restitution, including using restitution in place of more restrictive penalties. He cautions, however, that we must clarify the difference between restitution and community service sentencing and discusses challenges which exist for future restitution programming.

Parole and the Public: A Look at Attitudes in California.—Describing recent events in California, Author Walter L. Barkdull stresses the need for parole authorities to develop community support for the concept of parole. Public attitudes hostile to parole have been crystalized by the release of several notorious offenders at the end of determinate sentences. Community groups have discovered the power of organized action to thwart the state's ability to locate facilities and place parolees. Resulting court decisions have provided both the public and parole authorities with new rights, while legislation has imposed severe operating limitations.

Long-Term Inmates: Special Needs and Management Considerations.—Society's response to crime has contributed to a number of trends which have resulted in longer terms of incarceration for convicted felons. Determinant sentencing, modifications in parole eligibility criteria, enhanced sentences for repeat offenders, and longer terms for violent offenders have resulted in an increase in time served and a subsequent increase in the proportion of long-term inmates in state facilities. The incar-

ceration of greater numbers of long-term inmates brings a number of programmatic and management concerns to correctional administrators which must be addressed. Using data on Kentucky inmates incarcerated as "persistent felony offenders," authors Deborah G. Wilson and Gennaro F. Vito identify the programmatic and management needs of long-term inmates and delineate some possible strategies to address this "special needs" group.

The Use of Counsel Substitutes: Prison Discipline in Texas.—Although prison discipline has changed significantly through internally and externally initiated reforms, it remains a critical aspect

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Stress Perception Among Select Federal Probation and Pretrial Services Officers and Their Supervisors

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Introduction

THIS ARTICLE is an overview of a recent study which examined a wide range of potential occupational stressors (work conditions) confronted by Federal probation and pretrial services officers, probation officer assistants (hereafter referred to as officers), and their work supervisors. In the research, officers reported their perceptions of listed work stressors on two dimensions: frequency of occurrence and intensity of reaction. The managers, be they chief, deputy chief, or supervisor, in probation or pretrial services office, reported on the same stressors, but in terms of how they perceived the stressors affecting subordinates.

The potential sources of stress examined ranged from inadequate preservice or inservice training, treatment vs. control approaches to crime abatement, organizational resource limitations, negative community perceptions of probation's role, to more mundane concerns of no parking space, no window in the office, improperly trained probation clerk, religious or political pressure at work, the type of client one supervises, whether the duty station is downtown or in a branch office.

Historical Perspective

Numerous writers (Ohlin et al., 1956; Glaser, 1969; Studt, 1972) have examined the "dilemmas" of probation-parole work, i.e., role conflict, treatment vs. control methodology; the lack of a genuine career ladder; increasing workloads, high expectations, and idealistic academic-preservice training. More recently the crisis of job stress, occupational disenchantment, loss of commitment, and burnout are cited as results stemming from low pay, negative self-image, and agency precipitated officer-client contact (Hussey and Duffee, 1980).

The 1970's witnessed demise of the treatment model, and putting people in prison became popular—but expensive. In the 1980's policy makers re-

discovered probation, an economically based decision which added to the complexity of probation's delivery of service "dilemma."

Federal Response

Federal probation has developed a wide range of community supervision programs to accommodate offenders who would have otherwise been imprisoned. Specialized caseloads have been instituted for drug/alcohol dependent, organized crime, mentally retarded, and mentally disturbed offenders. Officers are involved in an increasingly diverse range of operational and clerical duties, everything from collecting court-ordered fines and restitution to collecting court-ordered urine samples (Thomas, 1987).

New legislation and ongoing traditional program responsibilities assigned the Federal Probation System have stretched resources, financial and human. With political pressure to relieve prison and jail overcrowding, the number of probationers and parolees has increased. As caseloads increase, so does paperwork and cries for officer accountability. The Federal courts have found prison overcrowding unconstitutional, but not ever-increasing workloads that reduce the time available for community supervision. Increased numbers of "clients" result in the inevitable bureaucratization and a revolution of correctional caselaw, demands for accountability, civil liabilities, and the pressing need for Federal probation officers to fully document decisions to protect themselves from litigation, quasijudicial immunity and the Federal Tort Claims Act notwithstanding.

More recently there is the victim's rights movement. Victims are increasingly interested in all aspects of the administration of justice, that is, the plea negotiation, sentencing, and parole decision-making process. It is reasonable to expect the victims or their advocates will demand greater participation in the presentence investigation and to actively scrutinize the quality and intensity of field supervision.

Privatization is having an effect as well. With ever increasing responsibilities, ranging from pre-trial services through parole release, some Federal probation-pretrial services offices have found it expedient to contract for services (i.e., community treatment centers, drug and alcohol abuse aftercare programs). There are problems in contracting for services in the extreme, i.e., less direct contact by the officer with the client. If the purpose of probation becomes surveillance, as in intensive probation supervision or in some specialized organized crime caseloads, and treatment is secondary, then the U. S. Marshal, Drug Enforcement Administration, or Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel might do a better job since they are better equipped to be "cops." The argument gains credence as offices experiment with electronic surveillance devices, making supervision a technological responsibility rather than a human one (Thomas, 1987).

The role of the administrator has likewise changed. It is more than supervising subordinates and preparing the budget. It now involves contracting for services, space, and equipment, protecting the agency from lawsuits initiated by clients and staff, negotiating with the public and media on the value of community programming, and monitoring monies collected from probationers and parolees. Today's chief probation or pretrial services officer has evolved into an individual with expertise in contract law, finance, accounting, space acquisition, personnel, public relations, and information systems; all this with one eye to the next challenge coming from the bench or halls of Congress.

Will Federal probation cease to be a human services function? Will the human side of probation be computerized and privatized? Will probation become nothing more than a contracting and accounting function? In the future should probation officers be drawn from schools of business or recruited and trained like police? Should Federal probation give up its humanistic goal of helping the offender help him/herself to ensure public safety? Are we to substitute treatment objectives for cost beneficial solutions to prison overcrowding? As probation officers, do we dwell on the amount of fines and urine collected or the redirection of troubled individuals?

Federal officers, all probation-parole-pretrial officers, are responding to long-standing problems made more complex by the times. If we are to believe the literature, officers are responding inappropriately because individual and organizational levels of understanding are lacking or being ignored (Fogel, 1981).

Saddest of all is the reality that changes occurring

today and continuing tomorrow are not internally sponsored, but forced upon the system, primarily by legislative initiatives. It is, for those involved in the work of helping others, a time of change, a time of stress.

Study Objectives

The original research project was designed to focus some of the current interest in occupational stress on a select group of Federal officers and their supervisors in 11 Western States.

Practical objectives of the research included: (a) clarify the nature and extent of occupational stress as it confounds Federal officers in their daily routine; (b) examine uniqueness and/or similarity of the occupational stress these officers face vis-a-vis workers in other human service professions; (c) help identify stress points and stimulate awareness of those who are providing middle management responsibility; (d) aid clients by finding ways to mediate work pressure on those officers who investigate or supervise them; (e) use findings to enhance ongoing system-wide educational programs and local inservice instruction; (f) add to the limited knowledge about Federal probation officer stress; and (g) create an awareness at the district and national levels for the need to examine stress-inducing managerial practices and procedures (Thomas, 1987).

Definitions of Stress

Selye (1956) defined stress as "The non-specific response of the body to any demand." Any demand whether painful or pleasurable can be stressful, i.e., a promotion at work or a rejected presentence report recommendation. Another view of stress is the person-environment fit, a perspective that represents the current consensus on the definition of job stress (Whitehead, 1983a). It is as Chesney and Rosenman (1980) note, "A lack of congruity between the individual and their physical or social environment."

In this context, it is critical to remember that what is perceived as a negative stressor by one officer may be perceived as an exciting challenge by another officer.

Comparison with Burnout

Some writers believe the concept of stress is closely related to the concept of burnout (Whitehead, 1983a, 1983b). This is not necessarily true when one recognizes that stressors, stress, or their consequences are not always negative, whereas, burnout is just one of many negative stress consequences resulting

from an "inadequate person-environment fit" (Kasl, 1980). Stress and burnout are not synonymous. Burnout is an intrapsychic defense against stress, a method of coping rather than direct resolution of the problem (Cherniss, 1980a).

Human Service Stress

Ianni and Ianni (1983) found that stressors developed from three distinct sources, the first of which is the individual, as some of us show greater or lesser tolerance for stress. Studies on stress coping among police (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Diskin, Goldstein, and Grencik, 1977) concluded research must focus on special characteristics of police work and how it is organized if we are to understand how individual characteristics are dysfunctional or purposeful in stress response. A second source of stress is the sociocultural environment. Social problems affect human service workers, as individuals and as professionals (Dawson, 1974). Again, the impact of these environmental variables is dependent on how the particular organization structures the individual's relationship to that environment (Hilgren, Bond, and Jones, 1976; Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrell, 1976). Finally, a less frequently cited area of stress is the relationship between the individual and the organization, the work role. The structural features of human service work, that is, policies and procedures, are directly related to perceived stress (Farber, 1983).

As several writers have observed (Katkin and Sibly, 1973; McIntyre, 1969; Merton, 1940), the bureaucratic mode of organization emphasizes, among other things, standardization and impersonality. The professional service ideal found in human service organizations (Cherniss, 1980a; Corwin, 1961; Kramer, 1974) emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual, sensitivity to special client needs, flexibility, initiative, and resourcefulness. Given these potentially incompatible conceptions of service delivery, a mismatch between individual and organization could result in role conflict stressors (Cherniss, 1980b).

The typical probation-pretrial services officer strives to achieve a sense of efficacy in work. If this goal is blocked, the person's self-esteem is threatened and the stress response is strong (Cherniss, 1980a). Competence seems to be a primary need—if these workers feel they are effective, all other annoyances and dissatisfactions tend to seem relatively unimportant (Cherniss and Egnatios, 1978). Sarata (1977) and Lortie (1975) suggested efficacy is perhaps the strongest job-related goal.

Certain occupations are thought to be more stressful than others. Yet, there is one constant, that being whether a stressor is stressful depends on a wide

range of events and circumstances. Every occupation has its own unique stress for some people, some of the time.

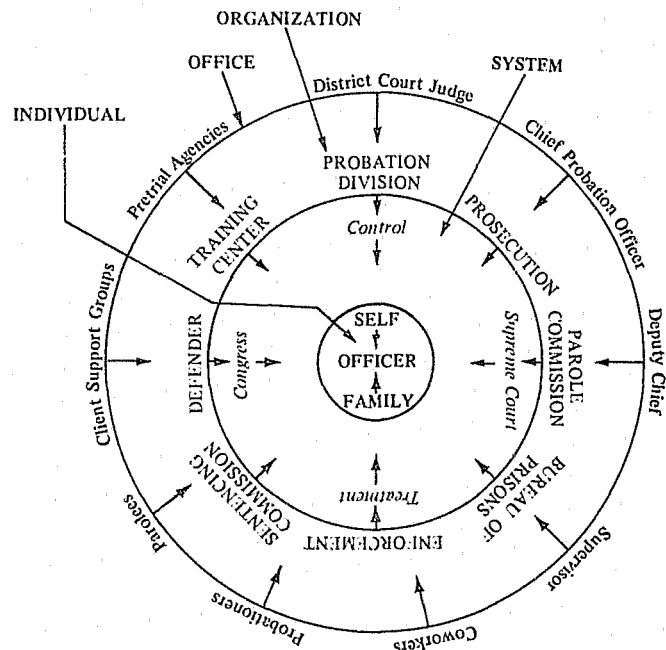


FIGURE 1. FEDERAL OFFICER CAREER STRESSOR CATEGORIES

Career Stressor Categories

It is impossible to develop a finite list of probation and pretrial services officer stressors. In this study those examined and discussed are categorized as Individual, Office, Organization, and System (figure 1). Potential stressors were selected based upon an extensive review of the probation-parole literature, feedback from a pilot study (not discussed), and from this author's 20 plus years' experience as a Federal probation officer at line and management levels.

Individual Category

Kahn (1974) suggests five specific areas of individual stress within organizations: role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload (quantitative and qualitative), responsibility for people, and occupational differences. Career development was added to the list by Ivancevich and Matteson (1980).

Individual stressors included in the study were: role conflict (conflicting requests from two or more people); role ambiguity (lack of clarity in expectations); work overload (too much work, too little time); responsibility for people (clients served); and career development (upward mobility, rewards).

Office Category

The nature of relationships among officers and managers influences their individual effectiveness within the office, district, or among court family members. Stress may occur because there is a lack of cohesiveness or adequate leadership. To capture these stressors, office climate, structure, territory, technology, leader influence, lack of cohesiveness, and group support were examined. *Climate* means characteristics that distinguish an office or district from another (Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly, 1979). *Structure* involves those individuals in a hierarchy who have little to say or who exercise little control over their job (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1980); that is, how bureaucratically a particular office or district is managed. *Territory* describes a worker's personal space. French and Caplan (1972) found that unsatisfactory work space can be a powerful stressor, as any officer without an office window or paid parking will attest. *Technology* refers to the ways in which management provides adequate resources to do the job (Woodward, 1965).

There is one other agent with significant effect on work activities: *the office supervisor*. With respect to legitimate power of office, rewards, and sanctions, all leaders are created equal (Katz and Kahn, 1978). They do not remain equal in the organization. Some managers are stress reducers, others are stress inducers.

Cohesiveness is the closeness among members of an office or district, their tendency to stick together, to be supportive of one another. Whitehead (1983a) did not report a high correlation between support systems and burnout in his study of probation officers.

Organization Category

In the Federal system, stressors at the organizational level are associated, in part, with the Probation Division, Administrative Office of the United States Courts; the Federal Judicial Center; the Bureau of Prisons; the United States Parole Commission; and the United States Sentencing Commission. These groups differ in attitude and behavior; they also have concerns of climate, technology, structure, and cohesiveness. The national response to a given district or office problem is either helpful, stress causing, or limiting, depending upon the individual actor's experience and perception.

System Category

The Federal Probation-Pretrial Services System is differentiated from other systems by its respon-

siveness to an everchanging national environment. This means the officer and manager is involved in a highly sophisticated work environment, characterized by growth, adaption, innovation, and stress. At the system level stressors include conflict between advocates of control vs. treatment approaches to crime, media reporting, the public image of criminal justice efforts, lack of national leadership, and stigma of being a probation-pretrial services officer.

Study Methodology

If probation work is stressful, what are the particular stressors, to what extent does stress occur, where, to whom, under what conditions, what are its correlates, and, finally, is the question(s) important? To answer these and other salient questions, the Federal Officer Stressor Questionnaire (copyrighted) was developed.

A major catalyst in this research effort was the writing of John Whitehead on probation officer burnout (e.g., 1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1986a, and 1986b). Whitehead in turn was motivated by the pioneering work of Christina Maslach (e.g., Maslach, 1976, 1978a, 1978b), who studied burnout and its generic causes under such headings as high caseloads, excessive paperwork, and lack of supervisory support.

The present study examines these and other perceived causes of officer stress and addresses the outcome in the section dealing with job-career satisfaction, personal accomplishment, burnout, and depersonalized attitudes toward clients. The research goal, or one of several, was to ground the questionnaire, capture reality, and identify statistically those stressors confronted daily by officers. Prior to the final drafting, the questionnaire was evaluated by several Federal officers and managers, representatives of the Probation Division, Administrative Office of the United States Courts and the Federal Judicial Center, a Federal probation management consultant, and a local probation training coordinator.

Initially it was believed one survey instrument could capture the necessary officer and manager data. However, one evaluator pointed out built-in potential for faulty perceptual responses by managers (reporting their own rather than officer stress perceptions) if one instrument was used, no matter how carefully the respondent instructions were worded. A second questionnaire, Form B, was developed which would (a) differentiate managers who did presentence reports and/or carried caseloads from those who only supervised subordinates; and (b) reinforce instructional wording for managers to report

on how frequent or how intense they perceived of-ficers to be reacting to given stressors.

Research question posed were relevant to the five sections of the questionnaire, 1) respondent demographics (age, sex, ethnicity), 2) job variables (workload, offender characteristics, job title, office location and size), 3) PICQ Burnout Inventory (professional intellectual curiosity questions) which covered job-career satisfaction, burnout, etc., 4) the 98 potential work stressors requiring a frequency and intensity rating response, 5) finally, an open-end response asking respondents the one best way to reduce stress in the respondent's workplace (not discussed here).

Specifically, the research questions sought to determine if there were statistically significant relationships between the frequency and intensity of stressor scores and 1) respondent background demographics, 2) particular job variables, 3) burnout characteristics, 4) officer-manager perceptions of individual stressors, and 5) between the four stressor categories.

There were 98 potential occupational stressors listed. Frequency of occurrence was scored: 0 = never to 6 = everyday. Intensity of reaction was scored: 1 = very mild to 7 = major, very strong. If the respondent marked 0 = never for Frequency, instructions indicated no score (leave blank) for Intensity. Managers reported on the same stressors, *but* in terms of how they perceived the stressor affecting their officers.

Main Sample

In May 1986, the two-part questionnaire (Form A-Officer and Form B-Manager) was mailed to 335 officers and 65 managers in the 17 districts comprising the 12 Western States and the Territory of Guam. A combined return rate of 63 percent (60.3 percent officer, $n=202$; 76.9 percent manager, $n=50$) resulted.

Questionnaire Validity

Three steps were taken to improve questionnaire validity: 1) ground questions and stressors in the Federal community corrections field; 2) put responses into ordered classes along a continuum of several categories; 3) ask multiple questions with different question forms that measure the same subjective state and combine answers into a scale or higher level (category) grouping.

Data Analysis

The data examination process and response to the specific research questions, while not reported in its

entirety here, included, 1) a descriptive analysis of respondent profile, job variables, management selection criteria, work assignment characteristics, organizational design, offender type, and professional orientation; 2) analysis of relationships between stressor variables the literature and experience suggest are important, plus those prominent in the research data; 3) explanation of the variation found in categories and PICQ Burnout Inventory by use of multiple regression techniques; 4) narrative report on research implications for Individual, Office, Organization, and System.

One other point needs to be made. The 98 stressors were initially reported and analyzed on the frequency and intensity dimension. As noted in the literature, to be stressful a stressor must be frequent *and* intense if it is to have chronic effect on the individual (Whitehead, 1983 a&b). Throughout the original data analysis, Frequency scores resulted in fewer statistically significant outcomes than did Intensity scores. For the purposes of this article, the following findings and conclusions are based on respondent (officer and manager) Intensity perception scores.

Findings

In the 12 Western States (and Guam) surveyed, the average officer is a white male, married, 41 years of age with a master's degree, has fewer than 10 years of Federal service, and between 11-15 years total community corrections experience. In 1977, Gooch reported the "average" officer was a white male, 37 years of age, married, had a master's degree, and 5 years of Federal experience. In 10 years Federal officers as a group have aged 4 years. This reflects system stability, but may in the future create staff replacement problems.

For managers, chiefs, deputies, and supervisors, the same "average" profile holds except the age is 45, with 11 or more years of Federal service and 16 plus years of total experience.

Officers in this study reported being more stressed about those work conditions (stressors) over which they had some locus of control—those related to themselves (individuals) or their local office—as opposed to external organization and system centered stressors. The most intense stressors reported by officers included: unnecessary paperwork, not enough time to do what is needed, uncertainty about retirement benefits, mileage reimbursement too low, family responsibilities, and financial worries. Retirement and mileage concerns are seen as primarily external,

whereas the officer may exercise some daily control over the others.

Findings supported other research (Whitehead, 1983a) which played down excessive workload and intensive client contact as prominent factors in work stress. In this sample, the majority of officers felt their workload was "about the same" as that of co-workers, and even though many officers reported putting in more than 40 hours per week, their face-to-face client contact rate was less than when they entered on duty. The underlying cause might be attributed to the stressor of unnecessary paperwork.

As a group, managers consistently over-estimated (perceived) stressor impact on their officers. When broken down by gender, and compared to officers, female managers had higher perceived stressor mean scores than did male managers. Does this mean female managers are more sensitive to officer work stress than male managers? Is there overreaction because they are in a traditionally male-dominated occupation? The study found that while women (managers and officers) tend to report higher levels of perceived stress, men (supervisors and officers) on average reported more depersonalized behavior toward their clients. This finding was also noted by Maslach and Jackson (1981) in their burnout study.

For stressors which are under-perceived (contradictive stressors) by supervisors, i.e., manager saw a bigger stress problem than did officer, in no case did the negative mean score (difference between officer and manager) exceed .59 (table 1).

Stressors deserving attention include political pressure at work, making dispositional recommendations, hazardous duty, lack of union organization, and recommending jail-prison time. The reported minimal differences give positive testimony to Federal officer-manager perceptual convergence on these potential work-related stressors.

Of particular interest was the finding that officer age-group had a slight curvilinear relationship with the burnout score ($p = .005$). Those officers under the age of 30 had the lowest reported burnout, whereas those in the 41-50 range had the highest, at which point the curve dropped in the 51-60 group. However, when looking at the seniority factor (length of service), the burnout relationship was linear ($p = .014$). For this sample, burnout is a function of seniority rather than age-group (Thomas, 1987: 258).

This finding somewhat contradicts Maslach and Jackson's (1981) finding reported in Whitehead (1983a:173) "... that burnout is likely to occur early in one's career ... those in the older range may be

TABLE 1. CONTRADICTIVE STRESSORS

Item	Stressor	Frequency			Intensity		
		Officer Mean	Manager Mean	Mean Diff.	Officer Mean	Manager Mean	Mean Diff.
12. Clients are unresponsive		2.19	2.21		3.11	3.04	.07
14. No rewards for extra effort		1.88	1.94		3.18	3.15	.03
23. Political pressure at work		.63	.50	.13	1.25	.83	.42
24. Need more vacation time		.97	.87	.10	2.06	1.87	.19
27. Favoritism by management		1.36	1.11	.25	2.22	2.17	.05
36. Making dispositional recommendations		1.53	1.93		2.45	2.20	.25
40. Conflicting decisions from management		1.39	1.41		2.45	2.30	.15
44. Hazardous duty		1.70	1.61	.09	3.29	2.96	.34
47. Use of firearms on job		.88	.74	.14	1.68	1.39	.29
52. Personal safety in the field		1.67	1.77		3.09	2.98	.12
55. No management leadership		1.27	1.22	.05	2.16	2.18	
57. Family responsibilities		2.74	2.62	.11	3.59	3.33	.25
59. Financial worries		2.29	2.09	.21	3.45	3.02	.43
60. Lack of union organization and support		.79	.80		1.60	1.24	.36
61. Job conflicts with personal values		.61	.67		1.14	1.02	.12
63. Stigma of being a probation officer		.46	.44	.01	.84	.73	.11
64. Overall physical and mental health		1.91	1.60	.31	2.92	2.33	.59
74. Political differences at work		.45	.43	.02	.72	.50	.22
81. Given too much responsibility		.87	.91		1.43	1.33	.09
83. Lack of government cars to use		1.14	1.13	.01	1.71	1.76	
86. No guidelines for adverse actions		.79	.78	.01			
88. Initiating revocation procedures		.98	1.14		1.86	1.77	.09
89. Recommending jail-prison time		1.23	1.67		2.04	1.72	.32

those who have survived the early stresses of their job..." Whitehead concluded, "Thus age in itself may not be the critical variable. Rather the critical variable seems to be seniority or selection or some combination thereof" (p. 174).

This author believes the critical variable in the Federal system is lower turnover, due to the officer selection process and diversity of duties-responsibilities.

The study also found officers who underwent a stress management orientation program reported less stress than those who did not or those who were still waiting for the program. On the other hand, officers wanting more information on work stressors (coping skills) had higher stress scores than those not wanting the intervention. In sum, those who need stress reduction want training, and those who don't perceive the need don't want it.

The Western States sample reported minimal conflict between officers and managers. Specific stressors such as "conflicting decisions from management, job conflicts with personal values, and political-religious differences at work" scored very low on both frequency and intensity scales.

There is one group of stressors in which district managers have little say, but receive much criticism, that being "bread and butter issues." Most of the pay, retirement, sick leave, and annual leave questions begin and end in Washington. One such stressor is somewhat controlled locally, the Quality Step Increase, an additional pay raise given for quality performance at designated intervals. For 83 percent of the officers in this sample, the stressor occurred "a few times a year or less," which is considered low.

The workplace support group issue was addressed through potential stressors as: personal problems at work, can't get along with coworkers, office cliques, and low staff morale. None of the variables exceeded an intensity mean of 3.05 on a scale of 1 = very mild to 7 = major, very strong. Perhaps the minor impact of these stressors is direct evidence of Cherniss' view that organizational factors, controlled by managers, are of more importance in understanding and mediating work stress than any other combination of events, i.e., "It is easier to restructure a role than to restructure the character of either an individual or a society" (Cherniss, 1980b, p. 158).

In the fragmented Federal community corrections system, much of what controls or affects the officer and supervisor occurs beyond their sphere of influence, i.e., Administrative Office, Probation Division, Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, United States Attorney, courts, and United States Sentencing Commission. Federal probation and now pretrial ser-

vices have become the repository of many new and controversial legislative attempts to control crime. This multirole approach (figure 1) has potential for conflict, if not collapse, especially if there is a lack of resources and training to do the job. Yet, in this sample, the Grand Mean for intensity of these organizational stressors was only 2.27 (1 = very mild, 7 = major, very strong). Why?

In this author's view, one important contribution to this finding is diversity of the Federal officer's role, a role that lends itself to change; change, in turn, requires flexibility and innovation which creates a more stimulating and stimulated officer response to Individual, Office, Organization, and System initiated work demands. As an example, the study looked at positions with specialized functions and those which performed a variety of tasks (generalists). In those districts where the generalist prevailed, office intensive stressor scores were significantly lower. This finding held for managers as well (Thomas, 1987: 236-38).

The research also attempted to determine if officers and, in turn, managers were adversely affected (stressed) by perceived system inconsistencies, anomalies, or injustices. Stressor variables included: public double standard toward crime, inaccurate media coverage, conflict between treatment and control, stigma of being a probation officer, unrealistic congressional legislation, plea bargaining, and lack of national leadership. None of these common stressors evoked strong respondent concern at either frequency or intensity levels. The "stigma" question only had a mean of .46 (scale 1.0 = very mild).

The study found those officers doing pretrial services work, independent office or probation managed, reported less stress than officers doing probation-parole work. Also, those officers who believed their manager, chief, or supervisor attained that position because of professional experience and management ability reported lower stress than those officers who believed the manager was selected because of seniority, political, or favoritism reasons.

Section 3 of the Federal Officer Stress Questionnaire (PICQ Burnout Inventory) measured respondent job and career satisfaction, personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and burnout. These items constitute a self-report scale designed to measure individual, group, or district levels of burnout, that is, cumulative "negative stress consequences resulting from an inadequate person-environment fit" (Kasl, 1980).

As measured, a mean score of 1.0 indicates no burnout, high career and job satisfaction, no dehumanization behavior toward clients, and strong feel-

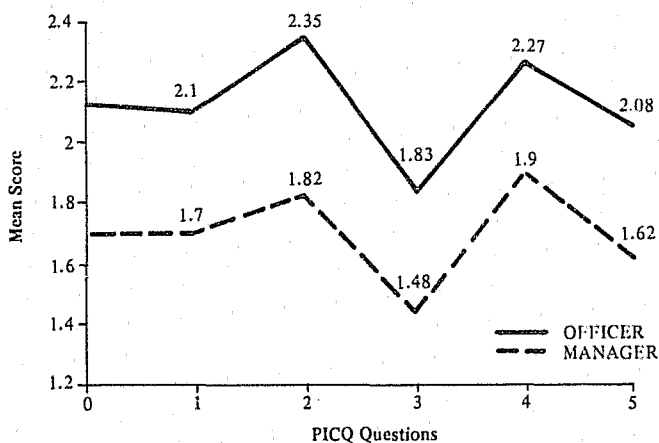
ings of personal accomplishment. A mean score of 3.0 indicates the expected "slings and arrows" of working with troubled people in a large bureaucracy, that is, generally satisfied with the work environment but recognizing some aspects, sometimes, could be better. A mean score of 5.0 indicates an acute state of burnout, negative and counter-productive feelings about all aspects of the job. This person (or group) needs immediate counseling or possibly other employment.

Figure 2 compares sample officer-management PICQ Burnout Inventory responses. Officers are reporting higher scores than management on each question. However, none of the question means exceed 2.40, indicating, on average, a generally positive work experience. Management is often more stress inducing than stress reducing; from this study managers are less stressed than officers, and the previously reported low conflict scores between the respondent groups might indicate the managers are causing less stress as well.

A second display of the data is table 2, describing sample frequency and percent of outcome for the PICQ Inventory, officer vs. manager.

PICQ 1 data indicate officers (79 percent $n = 159$) and managers (94 percent $n = 47$) like the office in which they work. However, when one examines officers "undecided" (5 percent $n = 11$) and those "not satisfied" (16 percent $n = 32$), there is a cumulative group of 21 percent who may not be contributing to office mission effectively or efficiently.

In *PICQ 2*, 19.3 percent ($n = 39$) of the officers feel they are actually burned out. Combined with an additional 16 percent ($n = 31$) "undecided" there is the core of a potentially serious problem.



1 = I am satisfied with my office 4 = I am positively influencing others
 2 = I feel burned out from my job 5 = I am satisfied with my career
 3 = I treat clients as impersonal objects

FIGURE 2. PICQ MEAN BURNOUT CHART

By comparison, Whitehead (1983a) discovered 13 percent of his sample ($n = 920$) reported feeling burned out "a few times a week" or "everyday" and another 7 percent reported feeling this way "once per week."

If we exclude the Federal "undecided" the results are about the same. Thus, for the Federal sample, as Whitehead (1983a) found in his, it would be an exaggeration to paint a totally pessimistic profile. Yet, a significant minority of officers reported they were experiencing negative feelings about their jobs or were undecided how they felt, which in itself indicates a problem in search of mediation at some level of activity or category. Only one manager indicated being burned out (2 percent) with four "undecided."

PICQ 3 is the depersonalization question designed to capture respondents' attitudes about their treatment of those human beings who come under their authority and control. Table 2 reveals that 9 percent ($n = 19$) of officers treat probationers and parolees as impersonal objects attendant to 8 percent ($n = 17$) who felt they were not a positive influence on other people's lives. However, this is a contradiction when noting the burnout percentage was 19 percent. Can a burned out officer have a positive influence on clients and treat them as something more than impersonal objects? Can they be satisfied with their agency and/or career?

According to these figures it is possible for some officers to be burned out and still be productive employees. A better answer might be it is more fashionable for officers to admit being burned out, or admit they cannot help everyone who sits across from them in a counseling role, than admit to dehumanizing behavior or attitudes about people of less fortunate circumstances. The possibility of denial exists for the suspect 10 percent, or there could be reporting error.

In *PICQ 4* we find 68 percent ($n = 138$) of the officers agreeing that they positively influence the lives of others. However, about 23 percent ($n = 46$) are "undecided" which is probably a more honest answer, with the previously noted 8 percent indicating less than satisfactory feelings about the importance of their work. As stated in the *PICQ 3* discussion, the value of this "influence" score is better understood in the context of whether one is burned out or treating clients in a dehumanizing manner.

In *PICQ 5*, officer career satisfaction (77 percent $n = 156$) numbers almost equal officer agency satisfaction responses (78 percent $n = 159$). There are more officers undecided about their career (14 percent $n = 28$) than their agency (5 percent $n = 11$).

Ninety-four percent ($n = 47$) of the managers were satisfied with their office and career in Federal probation.

Finally, by averaging PICQ scores (figure 2) across the five questions for officer and management, a Total Burnout Score is found. For officers it is 2.12 and for management, 1.70. Overall, with an average being 3.0, the problem of burnout in the Western States sample does not appear critical, but there are identifiable pockets of concern.

The foregoing described officer perceptions. For management the picture is generally clearer. In PICQ 2-3-4 (table 2), managers are showing less signs of burnout and a less dehumanizing attitude toward clients. Eighty percent ($n = 40$) felt they are a positive influence on others with 12 percent ($n = 6$) "undecided," and 6 percent ($n = 4$) indicating "not applicable." The latter is interesting, and without any evidence to the contrary, it may be these managers do not have direct contact with probationers and parolees, and thus felt the question truly did not apply. This same "not applicable" response occurred in PICQ 3 (clients as impersonal objects). There were 21 managers who indicated "N/A," and this is more difficult to explain since at one time each of these respondents must have worked with persons in the service group and formed attitudes/opinions about them. Again, it could be a matter of no on-going contact with defendants, thus the "N/A," or, reporting error. In PICQ 1 and 5, managers report more satisfaction with their job and career than do officers.

Implications for Officers

Individual awareness is the logical beginning in the understanding of job stress. Many things upset us. Some we control and some we don't. Avoiding negative stress requires a conscious effort. Knowing what causes one's stress is critical if one wants to survive a career in community corrections.

Research data found officer age was inversely but weakly correlated ($p = .020$) with Organization category stressors.

Can we conclude that as one gets older, the interest in or reaction to organizational stressors diminishes? Is outcome the result of successful coping, being beaten down by the system, or a case of rust-out? Remember, the seniority or "job years" factor when compared with burnout showed a linear relationship; in truth, the longer you are in Federal service, the greater your potential for rustout and burnout, but not necessarily dropout.

As noted earlier, support groups had minimal impact on officers. This was also found in Whitehead's (1983a&b) studies. However, for Federal officers, religion was inversely but significantly correlated with burnout, that is, the stronger the reported religiosity, the lower the burnout score.

The study found weak and/or inconclusive relationships between background (demographic) variables and reported stress. This tends to support Cherniss' (1980b) and Brown's (1986) contention that organizational factors, controlled by managers, are

TABLE 2. SAMPLE PICQ FREQUENCY-PERCENT OUTCOME

Question	Officer ^a						Management ^b					
	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
PICQ 1	159	79	11	5	32	16	47	94	1	2	2	4
PICQ 2	39	19	31	16	132	65	1	2	4	8	45	90
PICQ 3	19	9	12	6	170	84	1	2	0	0	27	54
PICQ 4	138	68	46	23	17	8	40	80	6	12	0	0
PICQ 5	156	77	28	14	17	8	47	94	2	4	1	2

Note: PICQ 3 Management = 21 responses "not applicable"

PICQ 4 Management = 4 responses "not applicable"

The survey scale originally five levels: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. Percentage may not equal 100 due to rounding.

^a $n = 202$, ^b $n = 50$.

1 = I am satisfied with my office

2 = I feel burned out from my job

3 = I treat clients as impersonal objects

4 = I am positively influencing others

5 = I am satisfied with my career

more important in understanding work stress and its successful intervention than one's personal background.

Implications for Managers

A manager may not possess the ability or means to correct an identified stressful condition and, in some instances, may not even recognize a problem exists (contradictive stressor).

A simple and periodic "stress check" is a logical approach to raise one's consciousness, or, as Cherniss stated, "If they (managers) are not aware of the negative effects... little can be done to alleviate job stress and burnout" (Cherniss, 1980b: 159).

Studies have indicated (Bass, 1961) that employees are more likely to follow the suggestions of the supervisor if he/she has demonstrated an ability to help others solve their problems. This may explain why those officers in the Federal sample who believed their supervisors and chiefs were selected on criteria of managerial experience and ability had lower stress and burnout scores (Thomas, 1987: 266-68) than those believing politics, seniority, or favoritism were the main criteria.

Managers must recognize there is a strong relationship between job-career satisfaction and lower stress-burnout. In the Federal study, the highest positive correlations were between job satisfaction, Individual-Office Stressor Categories (figure 1), and burnout. This is important since Maslach specifically disclaimed a strong correlation between job satisfaction and burnout in her work (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Whitehead (1983a) found a strong correlation in his study on burnout, and to the degree his and the Federal sample are representative of probation officers, Maslach's contention is questionable. Simply stated, whatever managers can do to improve job satisfaction will, in turn, lower stress and reduce burnout (Brown, 1986).

Managers can benefit from another finding, not unlike that reported by Whitehead; that is, the absence of a predominant relationship between workload indicators and burnout. Officers reporting less face-to-face client contact than when they entered on duty had higher burnout means than those with more or the same fact-to-face contact (Thomas, 1987: 269). Thus, from a "hours of contact" perspective, the often held implication or belief that simply reducing workload will reduce stress and/or burnout is questioned.

Perhaps it is more critical, based on the officers' most frequently reported stressor, "not enough time to do what is needed," for managers to ascertain the true point at which workload or some other function

really interferes with an officer's ability to do a quality job, because as Cherniss notes, "Probation-parole workers want to be competent and effective" (Cherniss, 1980b: 48). Perhaps events other than workload, i.e., management initiated tasks, compromise officer feelings of personal accomplishment and, in turn, job-career satisfaction.

In sum, the quality of management has much to contribute in concert with the individual officer's perception of who he/she is and how well the officer is doing what he/she wants to do. It may well be the leading cause of job stress is a management style that fails to provide workers with appreciation, support, and stability (Golembiewsky, 1986). For the Federal officer, this author concludes, it is a quality selection process, diversity of role attendant to enlightened management, that mediates job stress, not to mention inhibits rust and burnout, in the Federal Probation System.

Conclusion

This grounded study suggests several avenues for future research. First, the study was designed to be a regional examination of job stress within the Federal Probation System. To validate or repudiate the findings, a replication is needed in another geographical area of the system. This is critical since local ground rules, attitudes, and behaviors of potential respondents are shaped not only internally, but by differing community philosophies about the role of probation and how it, along with parole and pretrial services, is implemented in addressing crime and the criminal. This study attempted to lay the foundation for future job stress research in Federal probation.

On average, findings in the Western States were positive, and it appears incumbent (officer and manager) response to occupation job stress, while a concern in certain districts, is moderate overall. However, considering the local and national mood in terms of fiscal restraint and more punitive legislative approaches to curtailing crime, additional pressure will be put on Federal officers to meet statutory duties and responsibilities, while attempting to control the "dilemmas" of probation-parole work.

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